

Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee Minutes

Present:

M. Bose, Vice-Chair
B. Sandhu
D. Arnold
G. Hahn
J. Sandhar
J. Zelazny
M. Hilmer
P. Harrison
R. Brar

Agency Representative:

D. Geesing
K. Mark

Regrets:

Councillor Starchuk, Chair
H. Dhillon
S. VanKeulen

Staff Present:

A. Rossi, Planning & Development
C. Barron, Engineering
C. Wilcot, Planning & Development
E. Taha, Engineering
H. Chan, Planning & Development
H. Kamitakahara, Planning & Development
M. Kischnick, Planning & Development
M. Skyers, Engineering
R. Dube, Engineering
C. Eagles, Legislative Services

A. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

1. The committee is requested to pass a motion adopting the minutes of July 6, 2017.

It was

Moved by P. Harrison

Seconded by R. Brar

That the minutes of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee meeting held July 6, 2017, be adopted as presented.

Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

1. **British Columbia's Agricultural Land Commission:
Exclusion Process and Improvements**
Kamelli Mark, Regional Planner and Lindsay McCoubrey, Policy Analyst,
Agricultural Land Commission
File: 6880-75

The delegation provided a Power-Point presentation on the Agricultural Land Commission's pre-application procedures for onsite signage and notification requirements related to the Agricultural Land Reserve's exclusion applications.

The following comments were made:

- The delegation noted that in accordance with legislation, notification to the public of the exclusion is required prior to submitting the application to the ALC. Notification requirements include newspaper advertisements, notice to adjacent owners in the ALR, and photographic proof of signage, all of which is required to be submitted with the application. The ALC has 60 days to review the application once it is received through the online portal.

- It was noted that there is a period of time when pre-application notification and signage may be placed on a site by the applicant before ALC or Local Government staff have received an official application through the ALC portal program. This interim period makes it difficult for Provincial and Local Government staff to know about an application and provide information to any inquires that may arise.
- If information is incorrect on the signage or in the newspaper ad, it would require staff review (City or Provincial staff) once an application is formally received. This could hold up the process for the applicant if missing or incorrect information is provided.
- Once an application is submitted to the ALC, the Local Government is notified and if an applicant provides all required information and application fees, a development application sign may be placed on the site again.
- The Local Government Council may use its own discretion on whether or not to forward the matter to the ALC. There is no timeline in which the Local Government has to make their decision; however, if a decision is made by Council, the municipality must forward the application to the ALC board for consideration within 60 days. If the Local Government does not authorize the application, there is no need for the ALC to consider it.
- The ALC hopes to strengthen the content on the online portal and include an option that would advise ALC and Local Government once notification signs have been posted. The ALC is considering working with Local Government to propose changes to sign notification size, and standardized content, and are creating a guidance document for which applicants can refer to; which includes adding items such as a Local Government's application/file number, as well as providing a specific and up to date Local Government contact email and phone number, and signage site location standards.

The Committee suggested that the notification for exclusion in newspapers ads could include the local farming newspaper as the Surrey Now does not distribute its Newspapers to some areas located within the ALR.

C. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

D. NEW BUSINESS

1. **Proposed Exclusion from the ALR**
Adam Rossi, Associate Planner
File: 6880-75; 7917-0316-00

Item D.1 was deferred to the October 5, 2017 AFSAC meeting.

2. Development Permit for Farm Protection

Heather Kamitakahara, Planner

File: 6880-75; 7916-0228-00

The following comments were made:

- The subject property is 3.7 hectares (9.3 acres) in size, designated Suburban in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Proposed One Acre Residential Gross Density (RA-G) in the North Grandview Heights Neighborhood Concept Plan (NCP).
- The applicant is proposing to amend the land use designation from Proposed One Acre Residential Gross Density (RA-G) to Single Detached (2.4 upa), amend the NCP to revise the road network and location of open space, rezone from One Acre Residential Zone (RA) to Quarter Acre Residential Zone (RQ), and subdivide into 25 suburban single family residential lots. A Hazard Lands Development Permit for steep slopes and a Farm Protection Development Permit for lots adjacent to the ALR are required under the application.
- The Committee noted that the removal of the large greenspace area will continue to make these farmlands susceptible to flooding. It was noted that without appropriate rainwater management, farmlands would be impacted and the farming capability in 20 years may be worsened with flooding and drainage issues.

The Committee noted the application is consistent with neighbouring applications and generally consistent with city farm protection development permit requirements and request that staff perform a storm management plan.

It was

Moved by P. Harrison

Seconded by G. Hahn

That the Agriculture and Food Security

Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager of Planning and Development to support Development Application 7916-0228-00.

Carried**3. Road Connection East of 18669 18 Avenue in the ALR**

Ehab Taha, Engineering Assistant and Maria Skyers, Project Supervisor

File: 6880-75; 7917-0286-00

The following comments were made:

- The applicants are proposing to extend 18 Avenue for approximately 300 metres which would provide road frontage for all properties in servicing agreement application 7917-0286-00.
- The subject properties are within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and in accordance with the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*, the City must apply for transportation, utility, and recreation uses in the ALR to the ALC.

- Staff are seeking feedback and endorsement from the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee for the new road connection prior to submitting a formal application to the ALC.
- Staff noted the applicants want to operate the subject properties as one farm and want access to the pond and use it for irrigation. It is believed that there is one existing water licence and members asked that staff to follow up in this regard.
- It was noted that if the application went to the ALC, the ALC could consider conditions such as requiring lot amalgamation. Staff verified that the City has a specific policy for applications for those who are applying for a road connection.
- Staff clarified that in the future, the applicant may apply for construction of residential dwellings on each of the existing five acre properties if road access frontage is provided, which may decrease farmable lands in the future.

The Committee would like to see the three properties in the subject application amalgamated and consolidated. The Committee observed that there is already an existing farm road that runs around the pond that could service the farm parcels, so the road extension may not be required primarily for farm purposes but rather for other non-farm uses.

The Committee does not see merit in supporting a road dedication as there is already access to the lands for farming use.

It was Moved by R. Brar
Seconded by G. Hahn
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager of Planning and
Development to not support Development Application 7917-0286-00.
Carried

4. Development Variance Permit 7917-0335-00
Christopher Wilcott, Planner
File: 6880-75; 7917-0335-00

The applicant is proposing a reduction to the east side yard setback from 15 metres to 6 metres for a farm building. The proposed farm building will be used to store farm equipment and vehicles. The subject parcel is located within the ALR has no existing structures.

The Committee expressed concerns that the subject property already had multiple existing farm buildings and non-farming vehicles.

The Committee discussed the applicants rationale for the Development Variance Permit and if it would benefit agriculture and farming practice to reduce the setback. The Committee expressed concerns that no matter where the location of the proposed farm building was, the equal amount of land would be taken out of agricultural production.

The Committee stated there are already several exiting structures located on the adjoining parcels of the farm, which is used at one farm.

It was Moved by B. Sidhu
Seconded by P. Harrison
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee recommend to the General Manager of Planning and
Development to not support Development Application 7917-0335-00.
Carried

5. Proposed Exclusion from the ALR

Helen Chan, Planner

File: 6880-75; 7915-0196-00

The following comments were made:

- The application proposes to exclude the subject properties from the ALR, amend the Official Community Plan (OCP) designation from Agricultural to Industrial, and rezone from One-Acre Residential Zone (RA) to Business Park 3 Zone (IB-3). The applicant is requesting that Council refer the application to the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC).
- The applicant has indicated the subject site is currently vacant and has not been farmed for over 20 years. Aerial photography shows cultivation as late as 2001. An agrologist report from the applicant notes that field mapping of soils in the 1970's classified portions of the soils as having an improved agricultural capability of Class 2 and Class 3. However, the applicant's report, which has not yet been peer reviewed, had downgraded portions of the soil to an improved agricultural capability of Class 4 because of past agricultural practices.
- Instead of adding land to the ALR as compensation for the exclusion as per City Policy, the applicant is proposing to design, finance and construct a regional irrigation district that would supply water from the Fraser River to approximately 965 hectares (2,300 acres) of farmland in the Upper Serpentine agricultural area.

- The application is not in compliance with the OCP designation and OCP policies to maintain the integrity of the ALR and its existing boundaries. The application would also require an amendment to Metro Vancouver's Urban Containment Boundary to exclude the subject properties. The proposal does not comply with several aspects of Council Policy No. O-51 (Policy for Considering Applications for Exclusion of Land from the Agricultural Land Reserve), including the requirements for a 2:1 replacement ratio or 1:1 replacement ratio with compensation supplemented by other improvements.
- Staff verified that under the applicant's proposal it would be expected that the City would take over operations of the irrigation system if a bylaw is passed for farmers to pay an annual charge to cover operating costs. The proposed regional irrigation district is estimated to cover 10% of ALR land in Surrey. Staff clarified the application is in its preliminary stages and would require much more clarification if it were to proceed.
- The applicant was present and indicated that a moratorium has been in place since 1997 on new water licences on the Serpentine River and that irrigation waters are being drawn illegally without appropriate water licences. Staff verified that there are several documented instances of water being extracted from the Serpentine River illegally.
- The applicant verified there would be an estimated charge to farmers of \$109 per acre under the proposal to use the water from the irrigation system.
- The Committee questioned if there was currently a shortage of water for farmers in the subject area. The Committee expressed that drainage is an issue in the winter and farmers primarily require more water in summer months. Staff clarified that they have asked the applicant to demonstrate farmer desire/need for the system. The applicant stated that the overall response from farmers was the system would be an economic benefit to Surrey and that consistent access to water would provide steady crop production.
- The Committee would like to see the applicant appear as a delegation to the Environmental and Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC).

The Committee expressed concerns regarding the pressure the proposal would put on neighbouring lands to lean towards additional ALR exclusions for more industrial or residential developments.

The Committee is supportive of the idea to provide water to farmers but expressed concerns that the anticipated cost to farmers for use of the irrigation system is not feasible, and that the proposal, if implemented, would add costs to farming which may not be financially possible for farmers to undertake.

The Committee expressed the view that even if the lands are not being farmed they are considered an agricultural reserve and should be preserved for a time when improved technology/farming practices allowed the land to be farmable. The Committee also noted that farming includes non-soil based agriculture.

The Committee expressed concern about the level of detail of the proposal. The Committee would like to see the applicant hire an independent party to conduct a comprehensive Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) for the proposal. The Committee noted that surveys of farmers should be accompanied by information on the proposal, including associated costs. It was stated that there is not enough information at this time for members to support the application. The Committee would like to comment on the proposal with the provision of more detailed information.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

F. CORRESPONDENCE

1. Proposed 2018 Meeting Dates

File: 0540-20 V

The Committee is requested to pass a motion adopting the 2018 Meeting Schedule as presented.

It was Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by B. Sidhu
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee adopt the 2018 Meeting Schedule as presented.
Carried

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee (ESAC) Update

No update was given.

2. Pie in the Plaza

Pie in the Plaza takes place this weekend on September 9, 2017 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at Central City Shopping Plaza.

H. INTEGRITY OF THE AGRICULTURE LAND

It was brought to the attention of the Committee that two properties located in the ALR had substantial illegal truck parking. Staff verified one of the subject sites are being investigated and are currently in process with the City's Legal Department.

I. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Verbal Updates

J. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee will be held on Thursday, October 5, 2017, at 9:00 a.m. in 2E Community Room B.

K. ADJOURNMENT

It was Moved by P. Harrison
Seconded by R. Brar
That the Agriculture and Food Security
Advisory Committee meeting do now adjourn. Carried

The Agriculture and Food Security Advisory Committee adjourned at 11:14 a.m.

Jane Sullivan, City Clerk

Mike Bose, Vice-Chair